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ORAL QUESTION (O-92/79/rev.)

with debate pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

by Mr LINKOHR, Mrs ROUDY, Mr ADAM, Mrs FUILLET, Mr GRIFFITHS, Mr LINDE, Mrs LIZIN, Mr MUNTINGH, Mr PERCHERON, Mr ROGERS, Mrs SEIBEL-EMMERLING, Mr SCHMID, Mrs CHARZAT, Mrs WEBER and Mr SCHIELER to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject: Safety of Pressurised Water Reactors

The U.K. Central Electricity Generating Board is considering the site for Britain's first Pressurised Water Reactor (P.W.R.) while the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate has claimed that the design of the British P.W.R. would be different from that of the stricken Three Mile Island No 2 Reactor, near Harrisburg (Pennsylvania). Following the Harrisburg accident, earlier this year, four more nuclear power stations in the United States have been closed down as a result of dangerous mishaps. Meanwhile, the opening of new P.W.R. power stations at Gravelines and Tricastin in France has been prevented due to the action of the trade unions who revealed the discovery of cracks detected in key components of both plants. In addition, progress on the construction of certain P.W.R.'s in the German Federal Republic has been held up pending

the outcome of legal action.

1. Will the Commission explain what differences in design of the British P.W.R. would prevent the possibility of a Harrisburg-type accident?
2. Does the Commission consider that the current design of P.W.R.'s manufactured by Framatome/Creusot-Loire and Siemens (K.W.U.) would similarly prevent a Harrisburg-type accident and, if so, why?
3. Does the Commission not accept that nuclear reactors with single-phase cooling systems based, for example, on carbon dioxide gas, are inherently safer than those with two-phase water cooling systems operating under very high pressure?
4. To what extent does the Commission consider that the cracks discovered in the Gravelines and Tricastin reactors constitute a risk to their safe operation and will the Commission consider making representations to the French Government so as to ensure the well-being of the nearby population (given especially the proximity of Gravelines to the Belgian frontier)?
5. Will the Commission state why it has been necessary to extend until 31 May 1980 the term of office of the group of high-level independent experts whose task is to review the overall current position regarding nuclear safety in the Community in the light of the Harrisburg accident, ¹ in view of the undertaking given by Vice-President Natali to Parliament on 9 May 1979 that this group "will submit a report to the Commission by the end of the year"? ²
6. Does the Commission not consider that it is the duty of the Governments of the Member States to inform the public of any safety problems which arise in nuclear installations and is the Commission prepared to assume such a responsibility in case of default?

(1) Commission Decision 79/828/Euratom of 2 October 1979, O.J. No L 251 of 5 October 1979, p. 26

(2) O.J. Annex No 243 (Debates), p. 132